

Rolling on R11.8m

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Despite SA's financial woes, ministers have received 13 new cars in the past six months

By **BOBBY JORDAN** and **JAN-JAN JOUBERT**

● The government has splurged R11.8-million on 13 luxury cars for ministers in the past six months, despite a shrinking public purse and austerity measures introduced to curb such spending.

The spending is detailed in National Treasury documents circulated in reply to questions by DA MP David Maynier to parliament's standing committee on appropriations this week.

The documents reveal that several departments asked for budgetary deviations so that their ministers could travel in style.

The latest vehicle binge cocks a snook at belt-tightening measures introduced by former finance minister Pravin Gordhan in 2013.

Gordhan and the Treasury at the time capped the price of cars for ministers at around R500 000 and this was adopted as government policy by the cabinet.

At the time that was the price of an entry-level BMW 5 Series, but a car like this now sells at around R700 000.

Make mine a Merc

The two most expensive vehicles among the 13 were bought by the Department of Public Works – a Mercedes-Benz GLE 350d (R1.23-million) and a Toyota Land Cruiser 200 (R1.26-million) for use by Minister Nathi Nhleko and his deputy, Jeremy Cronin.

The reason given for the purchase was that the vehicles replaced two BMWs that were seven and 10 years old and had more than 120 000km on the clock – the mileage prescribed by the ministerial handbook.

The handbook provides guidelines on the procurement of "tools of trade" for cabinet ministers and has been under review since 2010.

Public Works



Nkosingathi Nhleko



R1.264-MILLION
Toyota
Land
Cruiser
V200



Jeremy Cronin



R1.228-MILLION
Mercedes-Benz
GLE 350 D

Small Business Development



Lindiwe Sisulu



Nomathemba November



R1.1-MILLION
Mercedes-Benz
E400



R900 000
Lexus
GS350



R1-MILLION BMW 5

Public Service & Administration



Faith Muthambi



R813 886 Lexus RX350EX



Ordinary people are struggling every day just to put food on the table

David Maynier
DA finance spokesman